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The CASE of the Reform'd Episcopal
Churches in GREAT POLAND
and POLISH PRUSSIA consider'd,

IN A

693.d
SERMON

PREACH'D ON

SUNDAY Nov. 18. 1716.

AT

St. LAURENCE JEWRY,
London,

St. OLAVE's, South-
wark,

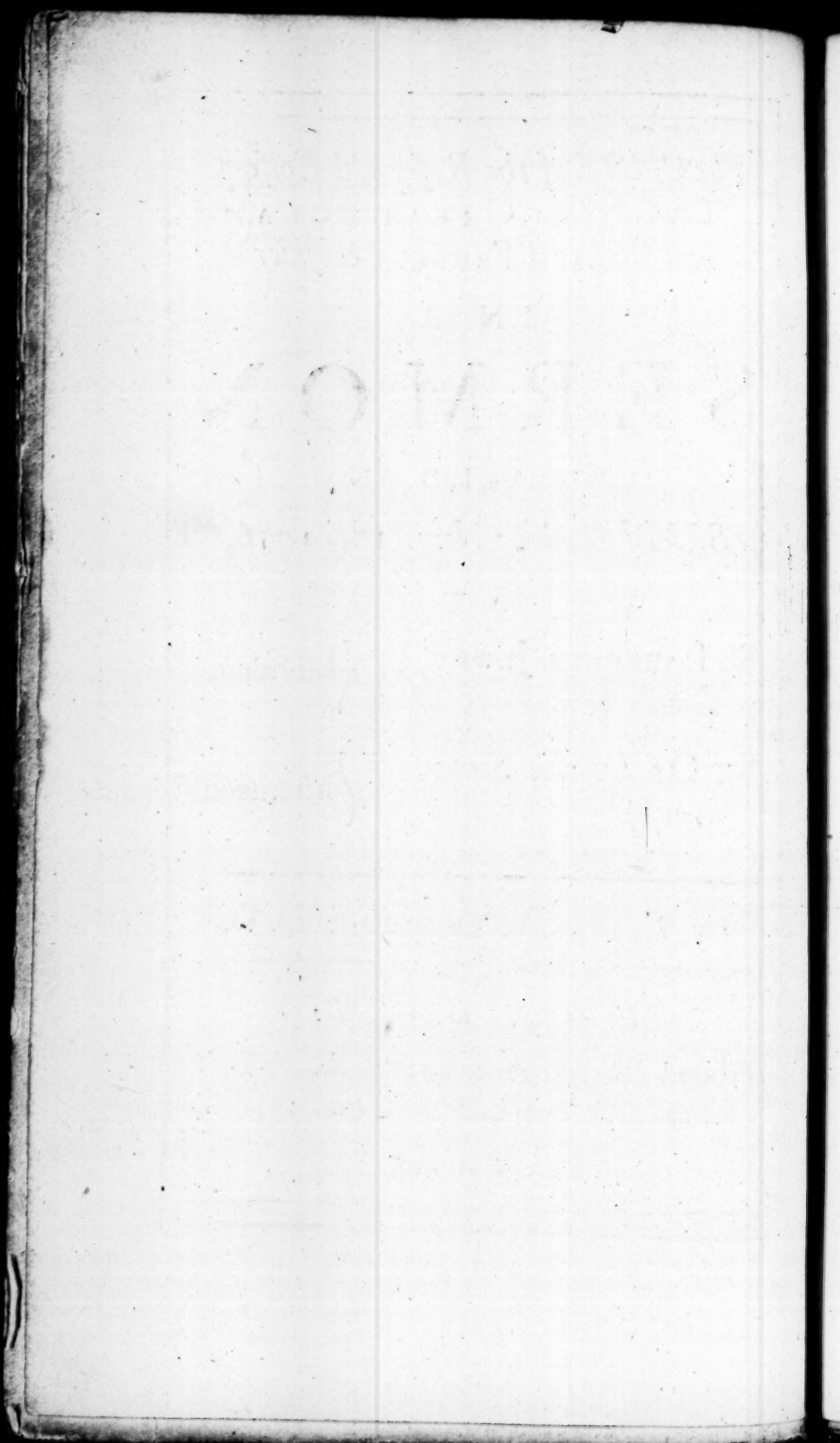
in the { Morning,
 { Afternoon.

By THO. BENNET, D.D.

L O N D O N :

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I JOHN 4. 11.

*Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought
also to love one another.*

IN the 7th Verse of this Chapter, the Apostle returns to that Point, which he had several times before touched upon in this very Epistle, *viz.* the great Duty of loving our Christian Brethren. *Beloved*, says he, *let us love one another.* And he gives a very substantial Reason to enforce his Exhortation, adding immediatly, *for Love is of God; and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God.* Whereas on the contrary, *he that loveth not, knoweth* Ver. 3. *not God; for God is Love.* He then proceeds to demonstrat the Certainty and Greatness of God's Love, saying, *In this was manifested the Love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son* v. 9. *into the World, that we might live thro' him.* And that we may have the deeper Sense of God's Love, that it may the more nearly and throughly affect us, that it may the more powerfully quicken our Love of each other, he observes, that God's Love of ourselves was perfectly free, the Effect of his own pure Goodness, we having don nothing which could deserve it at his Hands, nothing that could entitle us to solicit, or even to cherish the faintest Hope of enjoying, much less to promise ourselves, to depend upon, and live in Expectation of, such immense, such inconceivable Love. For says he, *herein is Love, not that we loved God, but* v. 10. *that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins.*

And from hence he justly infers the great Reasonableness of the Duty he had been injoining, and which he is desirous to lead us to the Practice of, saying in the Words of my Text, *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another; that is, since God has graciously*

conferr'd upon us such invaluable Blessings, since he has not spared his only beloved Son, but sent him down from Heaven to offer himself a Sacrifice for us, since he has thereby given us the clearest Conviction of the Sincerity and Strength of his Divine Love, by doing so much, even all that infinit Wisdom could invent, and infinit Power could execute, to effect, facilitate, and secure our Eternal Salvation; the Consideration and Enjoyment of this overflowing Goodness must necessarily lay upon us the strongest Obligations to endeavor and promote the Happiness of our Fellow Christians, to pour upon them all the Kindnesses that we are able to bestow, to contrive and search after Opportunitys and Methods of doing them good, of making their Lives in all Respects comfortable and easy here, and prospering their Journey to that blessed Place, where we hope everlastingly to rejoice and triumph hereafter.

I'm very sensible, that as I have not at present sufficient time to do it, so I need not give you the Trouble of proving to you distinctly, and by a long Train of different Considerations, that the Apostle's Argument is good and conclusive. For besides the Deference which you cannot but pay to the Authority of an inspir'd Writer (of whom you will not entertain so mean an Opinion, as to imagin him capable of deducing practical Truths from such Principles as will not support and evince them) even common Sense informs us, that the Duty of loving one another does naturally result from God's loving us to that great and unmeasurable Degree, which the wonderful Work of our Redemption by Christ's Death does most evidently declare and imply.

For be pleased to reflect a little. Does not our being deliver'd from eternal Torments, and not only made capable of, but encouraged and assisted to obtain, eternal Joys, constrain us to make some Returns of Gratitude to Almighty God? Can that Person be esteem'd a rational Creature, nay, is he he not far worse than a mere Brute, who does not feel the Warmth of such a Generous Love? Do not our Hearts even burn within us, are not our Souls enflamed, are we not impatiently desirous to vent that Holy Fire, which such Miracles of Mercy must needs have enkindled in us?

But who shall benefit the great God of Heaven and Earth? or what Advantage can the supreme Governor of the World receive from poor Mortals? Alas! such contemptible Beings as our selves can by no means repay
the

the Blessings we receive. We are utterly incapable of reflecting back the Happiness which is poured from Heaven upon us. However, we can certainly strive to please our Benefactor, tho' we cannot profit him. We can testify our Love by Obedience to his Laws, and prove that we are truly thankful for the Mercys we enjoy, by a strict Conformity to the Divine Will. We can use our very best Endeavors, we can labor earnestly, in doing that which God delights in; and perpetually express an unwearied Zeal, a quick and lively Joy, an uninterrupted Transport of the warmest Affections, in his Service.

Ought we not therefore to love one another? Is not mutual Love a principal Branch of God's Law? Is it not that which he lays the utmost Stresses upon? If the Scriptures were silent, and had not delivered this Precept; does not even the Light of Reason tell us, that we can't create a greater Pleasure to a generous Person than by imitating that glorious Property, by copying his own Generosity in his own sight, and paying him the Compliment of being as like him as we are able? Must not God therefore necessarily love those that love others? And can we oblige and pleasure God (pardon me the Expression) more effectually, more perfectly, than by loving others as he loves our selves, and following the glorious Example which he has vouchsafed to set us?

Farther, you well know, how constantly (and indeed most justly) that Man is detested, who refuses (when 'tis in his Power) to assist and gratify those, whom a most bountiful, most affectionate, and most steady Friend recommends to his kind Offices. And have we a better Friend than God? Has he not, by the Death of his own Son upon the Cross, redeemed us from intolerable Misery, and entit'led us to the Possession of Heaven it self, that we may reign with him in inexpressible Glory? And does not God love our Fellow Christians as tenderly as our selves? Is not their Welfare as dear to him, as our own? Did not Christ die for them, as much as for us? Do not these Circumstances, which are plain Indications of God's Will; does not the Course of his Providence, which makes every Man to depend upon others, and capable of Advantage by them; does not the express, the plainest, and most strict Command of God in his written Word; I say, do not all these things demonstrat, that our Christian Brethren are committed to our Care, that God expects we should do them all possible kindness, that we should love them for his sake,
and

and own the Mercys we have receiv'd, by shedding the Influence of them upon others that are round about us; in short, that we should always abound in good Works, and contribute our utmost towards an universal Happiness, which is the blessed Effect, and the natural Consequence, of an universal Love?

You see therefore, if a Man does really love God, he can't help loving his Christian Brethren. If he be sensible of God's Love to himself, 'tis impossible for him not to make others sensible of his own Love to them. If this Persuasion be rooted in his Breast, if he firmly believes, and does ever meditate upon, what he owes to God; he can no more forbear doing good to others (as Occasion serves, and as his Ability will permit) than the Fire can forbear to heat us, or the Sun can forbear to enlighten us. For such good Actions are the necessary Fruits of such good Principles. And therefore St. *John* declares roundly, *if a Man say, I love God, and hateth his* Ver. 20. *Brother, he is a Liar.* Tho' the Apostle was not defective in either Charity or good Manners, yet he does not say, *he is mistaken*; he does not soften the Expression, as if there were some room for Candor and a mild Construction; but he plainly affirms, that *he is a Liar*; that is, if a Man say, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he utters what he knows to be false, he speaks directly against his own Conscience, and flatly contradicts the Light of his own Mind; it being absolutely impossible for him that hateth his Brother, to love his God.

Wherefore, because the Apostle would fain make his Disciples love one another, in the first place he labors to convince us of God's Love to our selves; well knowing, that if we believe the one, we shall practise the other. And accordingly he sets before our Eyes God's Redemption of Mankind by Christ Jesus (which Instance carries with it the most irresistible Demonstration of God's Love to us) and then he concludes in the Words of my Text, *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*

In my following Discourse, I do not intend to treat, in a general manner, of that great Duty of loving one another, which my Text enjoins, by shewing the Nature and Extent, the Reasonableness and Necessity of it, and by proposing the several Encouragements we have to practise it. I hope to find other proper Opportunities of enlarging upon these Matters in the Discharge of my
Function

Function amongst you. But at present I shall confine my self to a particular Case, for which (I must profess to you) I have a very deep and hearty Concern, and which this general Precept does most certainly reach and direct us in. For since all Christians are commanded to love one another, that is, not barely to profess Kindness and tender Affections, but to demonstrat the Reality of such Professions by futable Actions, to love one another not in Word or in Tongue only, but also in Deed and in Truth, and consequently to promote the Happiness of their Brethren in all Respects whatsoever, and particularly by ministring to the Necessitys of those who stand in need of Assistance ; therefore we are undoubtedly required to love, and consequently to relieve, those distressed Persons, whose lamentable Circumstances so justly challenge our Commiseration, and in the pleading of whose Cause I shall imploy the remainder of that Time which your Patience affords me.

The Brief in behalf of our Reformed Episcopal Brethren in *Great Poland* and *Polish Prussia* has been read to you this Morning ; and you are thereby acquainted with their present calamitous Condition. Now as in the Beginnings of the Gospel the Apostles themselves earnestly sollicit, and their Disciples in many distant Regions chearfully made, a Contribution for the Support of the Church at *Jerusalem*, then laboring under grievous Misfortunes, and oppressed with Want ; so do my Lords the Bishops, the Successors of the Apostles, not only under the Protection, but also by the Encouragement of his Majesty. earnestly sollicit, and 'tis manifestly our Duty to make, a Contribution, according as God has enabled us, for the Support of these our Reformed Episcopal Brethren, whose Hardships are surely more than sufficient to extort Compassion from all such, as have not quite banish'd Pity and Good Nature out of their Breasts.

This therefore being so evident in Fact, and being in so Christian a Manner imparted and recommended to our Consideration ; I must own, I did not doubt, but the Sufferers would of course tast the blessed Effects of that Generous Spirit, which has so often and so bravely discover'd it self, in this Nation in general, and in this great City in particular, to the lasting Honor of our Country, to the Glory of our Great and Good Master, and to the unspeakable Comfort of those, to whom God has enabled us, and has therefore commanded us, to shew Mercy.

But

But I have reason to fear, that evil Arts have been used (with what sinister Views, 'tis not difficult to guess) to the Prejudice of these poor Sufferers. False Suggestions have been raised, and industriously scatter'd amongst us, to obstruct our Charity towards them. They have been grievously misrepresented to us; and perhaps some of us have been almost tempted to believe, that they either are not at all, or at least are not to so great a Degree, the Objects of our Christian Love, and that a large Share of our Bounty would be ill bestow'd upon them. Wherefore I think my self bound in Justice, not only to the Petitioners themselves, but also to our holy Redeemer (who is graciously pleased to accept those Alms as bestowed upon himself, which are bestowed upon his afflicted Members; and who is consequently injured in his own Person, when our Liberality is withheld or lessen'd to proper Objects) to set this Matter in a true Light, and to give you short Hints touching some Particulars, about which you may probably desire to be inform'd and satisfy'd. By this Means, I trust in God, I shall obviat the Malice of such as bear an ill Will to these faithful Servants of our dear Lord; and open the Fountain of your Christian Love, which has flow'd so plentifully upon other (nay, I will venture to say, upon some less moving) Occasions.

'Tis well known, and universally acknowledged, that these our Brethren are descended from those Persons, who forsook the Corruptions of the Church of *Rome*, by the Influence (principally) of those Eminent Saints and Martyrs *John Huss* and *Jerom of Prague*, who receiv'd their Doctrin (in a good measure) from our truly famous Countryman *John Wickleff*, to whom we are obliged for the first Dawnings of that Reformation, the first Glimmerings of that pure Gospel Light, which (blessed be God for it) does now shine so brightly in this Land.

From hence some have taken an handle of Calumny, and reproach these our Brethren as a sort of Monstrous Christians. They have revived those Accusations, with which the *Papists* formerly loaded the aforesaid laborious Preachers, and cast all that Filth upon their present Successors in Tribulation.

One wou'd think, this stale Trick should hardly succeed in a Protestant Country; and indeed it may justly be thought needless to answer such an Objection. Wherefore

fore I shall not labor in the Confutation of that Mass of *Papish* Slanders, and repeat what has been so often said in answer to them. The truth is, this Cause does not need such Methods of Apology. We are not bound to justify all the Actions of those who were our Predecessors in the Opposition we make to *Papery*. The *Papists* of these Days wou'd be very loath to justify all the Proceedings of the *Papists* in ancient Times; and wou'd think their Religion ought not to suffer for the Faults of its *quondam* Professors. Surely we have at least an equal Right to the same Plea.

The first Beginners of Reformation were but Men; and (tho' I am persuaded they were truly good Men, and that they were by no means liable to those Charges which the *Papists* then did, and now do, lay on them; as I'm satisfy'd I cou'd make appear, were it needful, or did this Cause require it; yet I say) if they made some false Steps, a small measure of Candor wou'd incline us to overlook them. Let the *Papists* remember, what an *Egyptian* Darkness had spread over the World, what a monstrous Ignorance had blinded the Understandings of Mankind, how gross, how unsupportable their Religion was grown, and what Impediments lay in the way of all such as wou'd aim at a Reformation. Wherefore, when the Light broke in, wou'd not the strongest Eyes tremble? Must they not needs see dubiously? Did not the Lustre it self confound them by its Vigor and Novelty, and hold their Judgments for a while in Suspense? No Wonder, that every Object was not seen clearly upon such a sudden Irruption; and that an exact Judgment was not formed upon every Particular, of which so great a Variety crowded in upon them, each of which needed a most accurat Examination. Blessed Heroes, that struggled with such Difficulties, and yet had the Courage to persist in their Labors, and win to themselves a Crown of Martyrdom by their Perseverance! Doubtless their Reward is with the Most High! The Sincerity of their Hearts abundantly compensated for the (supposed) Errors of their Understandings.

But how does such an Objection become the Mouth of a Church-of-England-man? *John Huss* and *Jerom* of *Prague* are not pretended to have been more erroneous than our *John Wicleff*. Nay, 'tis the everlasting Clamor of their Adversaries, that they were equally erroneous. Now

I don't at present (a) inquire, whether *Wicleff* was erroneous, or no ; but suppose that he were, and that a *Papist* should object his Errors to a Member of the Church of *England* ; What Reply wou'd the Churchman make ? Wou'd he not answer, that tho' *Wicleff* was not in all Respects fully apprized of the Truth, by reason of those Disadvantages he labor'd under, and which are now at length happily removed ; yet our present Reformation is justifiable notwithstanding ? Wou'd he not appeal to our Liturgy, our Articles and Homily's, and challenge the *Papist* to find any of *Wicleff*'s (pretended) Errors in those authentic Evidences of our Doctrins ? Whatever Mistakes *Wicleff* maintained, we have long since seen them, and forsaken them ; and therefore 'tis utterly unreasonable for the *Papists* to impute his Mistakes to us ; as if we were answerable for such Errors, as we openly renounce.

And may not our Reformed Episcopal Brethren defend themselves after the very same Manner ? Whatever Mistakes might be charged upon *John Huss* and *Jerom of Prague* ; yet look into the Confession of the *Bohemian Churches*, and into the Book of their Disciplin, and see what Errors you can find there. These are the Standards of what they teach and maintain ; and (believe me) whoever looks into those Books, will soon be ashamed of this Objection,

But it is farther said, that these our Brethren are not what they pretend to be. They would fain be thought, and they are pleased to stile themselves, Reformed Episcopal Churches ; whereas they have no true Episcopacy amongst them, they have no regular Succession of Bishops, as an Order distinct from, and superior to, Presbyters.

Now suppose this were true in Fact ; suppose that our Brethren were not properly Episcopal, and that they really wanted a regular Succession of Bishops ; will it follow from thence, that they are not Objects of our Charity, and ought not to be comforted under their present heavy Pressures ? Is this the Spirit of the Episcopal Church of *England*, which justly esteems herself, and has ever been acknowledg'd the Bulwark of the Reformation ?

I dare

(a) The Reader, if his Curiosity prompts him, may consult Dr. James's Apology for *J. Wicleff*, shewing his Conformity with the Now Church of *England*, printed at Oxford in 1608,

I dare say, you will not charge me with Want of Zeal for Episcopacy. The Divine Right of the Sacred Order of Bishops, as essentially distinct from, and superior to, that of Presbyters, is of such Consequence to the Interest of Christianity, and so firmly and evidently demonstrable, that I can't allow my self the Liberty of calling it in Question, or entertaining any Doubt about it. Nor can any Man more heartily lament, than I do, what Defects some Reformed Churches labor under in this respect; or more sincerely wish and pray for the Establishment of an Episcopal Government in all Protestant Churches; which I think they are bound in Conscience to endeavor to the utmost of their Power, in spite of whatever Obstructions their respective Civil Governors may create them.

But then, tho' I rejoice in the unspeakable Blessing of our Episcopal Government, and shall never (by God's Grace) slacken my Zeal for the Propagation of it in those Places which do not at present enjoy it: yet God forbid that I should ever abandon, or cease to commiserate and assist, those Churches that want it. Alas! what terrible Conflicts against *Papery* have they sustained? How much of their Blood have they cheerfully parted with, rather than submit to the Abominations of *Rome*? How closely, in all Human Views and Considerations, is our Interest united to theirs? How necessary is their Safety in order to ours? Our common Enemies the *Papists* know this full well, as the whole Course of their Proceedings shews. And shall we then, who are Episcopal Protestants, neglect those other Protestants, whose great Misfortune it is (I pray God in some Cases it be not their great Fault) that they are not Episcopal? Shall we suffer them utterly to perish, because they are not so happy as our selves? Is this a Christian Practice? Is this the way to enlarge the Episcopal Communion?

We shou'd rather by all possible good Offices beget in such as have it not, a Veneration for Episcopacy; and incline them to attempt the Introduction of a regular Succession of Clergy, where it is not, by shewing them the blessed Fruits of our own Ministry; we should make them sensibly the better for the true Apostolical Government we live under, by clear Proofs that we have an Apostolical Spirit amongst us; we shou'd demonstrate that we are ready to cherish whatever is praiseworthy in

them, tho' they are not so perfect as we wou'd gladly see them.

What! shall we deliver them up to the Rage of their Persecutors? Shall we suffer them to perish under their grievous Oppressions? Shall we let them be destroy'd from off the Face of the Earth, and cease to be a Church, because they are not as yet arrived to that State which we justly boast of? What Regard can they ever bear us, if we have Hearts hard enough to desert them in their extreme Misery, and that upon such a narrow soul'd Pretense as their not being blessed with an Episcopal Government? Must they not detest and abhor us? Must they not abominat such an Episcopacy, as shuts up the Bowels of Compassion, and does not suffer Persons within its Communion to love those that are out of it?

The *Samaritans* not only differ'd from the *Jews* in Religious Matters, but set up an Altar opposit to that in *Jerusalem*. against God's express Command. And yet Christ positively enjoins us to do as the good *Samaritan* did in the Parable, that is, to be truly beneficent to all that want our Assistance, tho' they happen to be at the utmost distance from us in Point of Religion. Many primitive Christians had entertained wretched Notions about the Obligation of the *Mosaic* Ceremonies, and did utterly Judaize even after they had embraced Christianity. But did the Apostles give up these mistaken Converts to the Malice of the *Jews*? Did they not endeavor by all obliging Methods, and a sweet Behavior, to win them by Degrees, and bring them to the perfect Standard of the Gospel? What Lessons do such Examples teach us, the Members of the Establish'd Church? Ought we not to treat our Reformed Brethren, tho' not Episcopal, with such an affectionat Tenderness, that they may at length, in Consequence of the Benefits they receive by us, be wrought up to a due Conformity to Christ's Rule in those Particulars, which at present we justly think them sadly defective in?

What I am now pressing upon you, does not (I assure you) proceed from any Latitudinarian Tincture, but from my Sincerity and Firmness in strictly Episcopal Principles. I am far from esteeming the Form of Church Government, and consequently the Regularity of ministerial Succession, to be indifferent Matters, which must truckle to the Conveniency of State; as if Temporal Governors had any Authority to mould the Church into what Form they please, and thereby to deviat from the Apostolical

Apostolical Institution, when it sutes their carnal Interest. No ; but what I speak, proceeds from the reverse of these loose Notions. My Zeal for Episcopacy, and for a regular Succession which so manifestly depends upon it, extorts it from me. I know no better way of planting Episcopacy, and consequently a regular Clergy, in those Reformed Churches which at present are destitute of it, than by doing our utmost to help them upon all Occasions, and prevailing upon them by our good Offices to become in all Things like unto our selves. And I doubt not but if such Methods be honestly and vigorously try'd, they will in God's good Time have their desir'd Effect.

'Twere very easy for me to enlarge upon this Head, and to shew the Weakness as well as Impiety of this Pretense, and especially how unworthy 'tis of, how inconsistent with, the Beneficent and Heroic Character of a true Churchman. But I forbear. 'Twould be doing too much Honor to this Insinuation, shou'd I bestow more Time in exposing it ; nay, perhaps 'twou'd be construed a tacit Insinuation, that there is an Appearance of Strength in it, some colorable Reason for it, or some Probability of Fact to ground it on. Whereas in truth 'tis built upon an utter Falshood, invented on purpose to serve a bad turn, and perpetuat the Sufferings of these our Christian Brethren. For whoever examines their History, and knows any thing of the present Constitution of their Churches, will confess, that our Brethren are truly and properly Episcopal ; that they have Bishops, not only in Name, but in Thing, even an Order of Spiritual Church Governors, distinct from, and superior to, Presbyters ; and that their Succession of Bishops is derived, not from a barely Human Unauthoritative Constitution, but from those, whose Legitimat Ordination to that Holy Function is unquestionable.

That I may clear this Matter briefly, be pleased to understand, that those Churches, which rejected and withstood the *Papal* Usurpations and other Enormitys, in the Twelfth and the following Centuries, till *Luther's* Time, had undoubted Bishops amongst them.

I am aware, that they have been charged by the *Papists* with asserting the Identity of Bishops and Presbyters in the Apostles Times. Whether this Charge was just, I don't at present Dispute. To be sure, we have no Reason to trust that Account which their Adversarys have given of them. But suppose the Imputation well grounded ;

grounded ; suppose that in those Days, before the Mists of Error were sufficiently dispell'd, before the Truth cou'd tolerably well be seen, some of those well meaning People shou'd imagin, that Bishops and Presbyters were not at the first essentially distinct Orders ; what then ? Will it follow that they changed the Form of Church Government, and indulged their new Notion so far, as to abolish Episcopacy, and reduce all to a Presbyterian Parity ? We know, that before our own Reformation was settled, some great Men amongst our selves were inclined to odd Notions much of the same Kind. But were they therefore so fond of them, as to new model the Church ? Did they therefore expel Episcopacy, merely to compliment their privat Fanys ? No ; for Men of barely common Prudence (whatever they may unluckily think either possible or lawful, in Cases of Extremity and absolute Necessity) won't make violent Alterations, won't turn an establish'd Order topsy turvy, won't try Conclusions in Government, and introduce a thorough Change, merely for the sake of changing. They won't risque the Church's Ruin merely to gratify their Curiosity in making Experiments and observing Consequences.

This was manifestly the Practice of those brave Souls. Whatever they might suspect to be defensible or feisable, had they been driven to it ; yet they preserved the ancient and established Hierarchy. And tho' the thorough Depravation of the *Romish* Bishops gave them Occasion to speak severely of Bishops ; yet they are to be understood of such Bishops only as were the Disgrace of their Order, and not of all Bishops in general. For they never condemned Bishops as Bishops, but constantly retained them amongst themselves. Infomuch that I don't remember to have read or heard, that they were so much as charg'd with rejecting Episcopacy by the bitterest of their Enemys in those Times, when such a Charge wou'd have don them incredible Mischiefs.

But to cut this Matter short, and prevent all Possibility of Cavil, I appeal to History and plain Fact. The Chain of their Succession, and the Method by which they preserv'd it, are very particularly (b) recorded, and that in

(b) *Verantamen, ad occurrendum quoquo modo Adversari-
orum calumniis, presertim sub initia reformationis illius, idem
sibi quoad fieri posset, observandum putarunt. Cumque dicti*
ibi

in the most satisfactory manner. When they were sensible, that they wanted Pastors, they resolv'd to obtain

illi Valdenses, legitimos se habere Episcopos, legitimamq; & non interruptam ab Apostolis usque successionem affirmarent : missos ad se crearunt tres à Fratrum Ministris, jam ante alibi ordinatis, ritu solenni Episcopos ; illisq; Ministros ordinandi contulerant potestatem : nempe, &c. Regenvolsicii Hist. Eccles. Slavon. Provin. lib. 1. cap. 8. p. 33. Trajecti ad Rhenum, 1652.

Sed isti, tum ob abusum apud Adversarios Episcoporum nominis, tum majoris odii ac invidia evitanda causa, Seniorum potius appellatione acquiescebant, uti & hactenus. Quamquam res ipsa & officii ratio illorum eadem est : sive Episcopi, sive seniores Superattendentes cum adjctione, sive seniores, Superintendentes absolute, sive Inspectores, sive Decani, sive aliis nominibus, Græcis vel Latinis vocentur. Ibid.

Maxima illis anxietudo fuit de Animarum Pastoribus, unde hos essent habituri, postquam quos in præsens habebant decessissent. Expectare, dum Romanæ Ordinationis aliqui Veritatis amore ad se transirent, res erat incertæ spei. Et meminerant Rokyanum toties protestatum, à fundamentis redintegranda esse omnia. Domi ergò erigendam esse Ordinationem, potestate eâ quam Christus Ecclesia dedisset : ut quamdiu ordinatos adhuc inter se haberent, illi ipsi ordinarent alios, & hi rursus alios sibi successuros. Inclinant sanè istuc ut desideria, sic & sententiæ : sed quassabat animos metus, an satis legitima foret Ordinatio, si Presbyter Presbyterum crearet, non verò Episcopus ? Et quomodo talem Ordinationem, si lis moveatur, defensuri essent, sive apud alios, sive apud suos ? Tandem post anxias annorum aliquot deliberationes, conveniunt (anno 1467) è tota Bohemia & Moravia primarii quique Viri, circiter septuaginta, multisq; ad Deum fufis lacrymis & precibus (ut num propositum placeret, & num jam tempus esset, ostendere dignaretur) voluntatem Dei sorte experiri constituunt. Eligunt itaque è medio sui, per suffragia, Viros novem, quos Ministerio suscipiendo præ cæteris judicabant idoneos : datiq; in manum pueri (in catum accersiti, & quid fiat ignorantis) schedulis ocllusis duodecim, distribui inter novem illos jusserunt. Erant autem novem illarum vacuæ : tribus duntaxat inscriptum fuit E S T : scilicet voluntas Dei, quam sibi revelari petebant. Fieri ergò potuit, ut omnes nacti fuissent schedulas vacuas : quod indicium negativæ Dei voluntatis futurum erat. Sed factum est, ut scripta illa tres venerint in manus trium inter eos, Matthiæ Kunwaldii, viri piissimi ;

Thoma

a Supply of them. And being themselves doubtful, whether an Ordination by Presbyters without a Bishop would be valid; or whether 'twould be defensible, if question'd; therefore, that they might effectually stop the Mouths of Gainfayers, and be furnish'd with a Clergy of indisputable Authority, they chose three Persons by Lot, whom certain

Thomæ Prelaucii, viri docti, & Eliæ Krenovii, singulari quadam solertia conspicui. Hos illi cum gaudio tanquam divinitus sibi datos amplexati, de Confirmatione illorum, seu Ordinatione nova, consilia caperunt. Cumq; in conseniis Moravia & Austria Waldensium quosdam esse scirent, ut omnino scrupulis conscientiae, suae & alienae (in praesens & in futurum) consulereut, ad illos Michaëlem Zambergium cum aliis duobus miserunt: qui quid actum esset explicarent, iudiciumq; de eo peterent. Invenimus illi Episcopum illorum Stephanum: qui accito Episcopo altero, & aliquot è Ministris, originem suam, doctrinaeq; suae articulos, & quid haëtenus horrendi per Italiam & Galliam passi essent, explicant: rursusq; nostrorum de secessione à Papa & Calixtinis relationem audiunt, approbant, congratulantur: quinimo tribus illis Ministros creandi potestate collata, manuum impositione Episcopos creant, & ad suos remittunt. Comenii Eccles. Slavon. Hist. Sect. 59, 60, 61. p. 23, 24. in his Book intituled De bono Unitatis & ordinis, Disciplineq; ac obedientiae, &c. Ecclesiae Bohemicae ad Anglicanam Parænesis, dedicated to K. Charles II. and printed at Amsterdam 1660.

Cumque dicti Waldenses, legitimos se habere Episcopos, legitimamq; & non interruptam ab Apostolis usque successionem affirmarent, creaverunt tres è nostrorum Ministris, ritu solenni, Episcopos, illisque Ministros ordinandi contulerant potestatem. Sed qui in odium tracto ab Antichristiano abusu Episcoporum nomine, Seniorum potius & Antistitum appellatione acquiescebant, uti & haëtenus. Ratio Disciplinæ, &c. Fratrum Bohemorum, Praef. p. 2. in the aforesaid Book of Comenius.

Antistes, seu Episcopus, nobis est persona ætate ac donis Dei conspicua, ad Ordinis in tota Unitate custodiam omnium Ministrorum suffragiis electa, solenni Ordinationis ritu confirmata, & sic autoritate publicâ munita; ut omnes reliqui, suo quisque loco, officium faciant, opusq; Dei sine scandalis & confusione ubique procedat, attendens. — Tales Episcopi quatuor, quinque, sex (prout necessitas postulaverit) constitui; & unicuique sua Diæcesis, sive certus Ecclesiarum & Pastorum numerus, assignari solent. Ratio Discipl. cap. 1. p. 19.

Omnes hi electi & constituti semel, per vitæ dies in officio (nisi quis minus digne se gerat) relinquuntur. Ibid. p. 20.

certain Bishops of the *Vaudois* consecrated Bishops; and by that Means they have continued a regular Succession of (c) Bishops, each of which is truly and properly a Diocesan, having a determinat Number of Pastors with the respective Congregations, over whom he exercises Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction; and they have not only Bishops, but also Priests and Deacons; which Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, are with them, as they are with us, three distinct Orders, this being most evidently their Notion and Practice, as appears by the Book of their Discipline, which is so well known to the Learned World.

I flatter my self, that I have by this time perfectly removed those Prejudices, and wiped off those Aspersions, which have been purposely raised by such as are unreasonably and causelessly disaffected to our Reformed Episcopal Brethren. You perceive by what has been already deliver'd, how unworthily your Zeal for our Excellent Church has been abused by designing Men, who have thereby attempted to abate your Compassion to those Protestants who so nearly resemble our selves, by painting them in the most ugly Colors, and fastening upon them such Ecclesiastical Deformitys and Imperfections, as I heartily wish could not be discerned in too many other Reformed Churches, whose Interest and Preservation we are notwithstanding obliged, by the Ties of Prudence as well as of Christianity, sincerely and incessantly to endeavor and pray for.

I hope, the Discovery of such malicious Falshood will strengthen your good Dispositions towards these Sufferers, and double your Liberality upon this melancholy Occasion. 'Tis exceeding hard, that those who are already so miserable, should meet with Defamation instead of Alms; and be filthily blacken'd in that very Country, from which they promised themselves the greatest Bounty. Surely, the good Spirit of God will powerfully touch your Hearts, and quicken and heighten the Vigor of your Christian Love; that even the Machinations of their Enemies may serve and promote the Interest of these Confessors, that they may receive the more ample Fruits of our Benevolence, to compensat for the rough Treatment they have so undeservedly met with.

C

Could

(c) The Names of their Bishops, and the Date and Order of their Succession, may be seen in *Regenvolselius*, Lib. 3. cap. 10. p. 314, &c.

Could I find time to enumerat and describe the continual Persecutions of the Ancestors of these our Brethren, for the Testimony they have born to God's Truth; how they have been harass'd and driven from one Country to another, being forced to forsake all they possessed, that they might not sacrifice a good Conscience, but keep themselves pure from the *Roman* Pollutions; wou'd the Compass of a Sermon permit me to give you a Relation of their various Tortures, the inhuman Barbarities, which they have patiently submitted to for Christ's sake, in a Course of diverse Ages, so that they are become as it were a Race of Martyrs and Confessors, and are almost extinguish'd by Sufferings: surely the vast Quantitys of that holy Blood, which the Parents have all along so joyfully spilt, wou'd at least purchase Pity to their Children; we shou'd at least be glad to support with our Money the Posterity of those Saints, who have endured such horrible Crueltys, as we our selves have most justly deserved at God's Hand.

Besides, the more immediat Cause of their present Oppressions, that which now adds the greatest Weight to their Sorrows, is the deplorable Consequence of a most bloody War. Alas! my Brethren, we have no Notion of those Miserys which War creates. I confess, we have paid Souldiers, and felt the Expençe of a War: but blessed be God, we have not had a proper Experience of it. We have not seen, much less have we groan'd under, the Ravages and fearful Devastations, that Complication of all sorts of Temporal Evils, which must unavoidably ruin those Countrys, that are cover'd with vast Armys, which spread universal Desolation all around them. But our Brethren have undergon the whole Course of such Evils; all which have been succeeded even by the Plague, which still lessened the Remnant of them; so that by an uninterrupted Series of the forest Judgments, as their Numbers are become few, so their Circumstances are exceedingly deplorable; their Country is laid wast, their Metropolitich Church and City burnt, their University destroy'd, their Clergy either dispers'd or murder'd, and the whole Body of them, both Priests and People, reduced to extreme Poverty. How well may they say what the Prophet *Jeremiah* put into the Mouth of the

Holy City; *Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see, if there be any Sorrow like unto my Sorrow, which is don unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the Day of his fierce Anger*

Anger. Are not such Persons therefore the Objects of your Compassion?

There is hardly any Topic proper to move Pity, which mayn't be justly used in behalf of these Sufferers. And yet I have spent so much of your Time in answering Objections (tho' as concisely as was possible) that I must not detain you with Persuasives.

And surely I need not do it. For be but prevail'd upon to make their Case your own (God forbid, that it ever should be your own. However, do but suppose it so) and dwell a little upon that dismal Thought; and certainly your Tears will flow, as fast as your Money ought to flow, at the bare Apprehension of it. I will not be so unjust to you, as to imagin, that a prolix Exhortation can be necessary. I should rather despair of succeeding by it, could I think that you do really want it in a Case so truly lamentable.

Act therefore as becomes you, and as your Brethren, nay, the whole Christian World, have just Reason to expect from you. Do not pretend that you are not able to relieve them generously. For would you but save the Expense of a few such Diversions, such Instances of Pleasure or Vanity, as you think very moderate and allowable, that very Sum would effectually comfort them. Let it not be said, that the Members of the Establish'd Church of *England* did at any time neglect to hear the Crys of their Reformed Episcopal Brethren; that they were ever once Deaf to their Complaints, and hardened their Hearts, and turned away their Eyes, as if they were apprehensive, that mere Humanity wou'd force them to bestow, what even their Christianity cou'd not draw from them.

But I must not be farther tedious. I will only beg leave to give you a piece of Advice, which I dare say you'll have no reason to repent your putting in practice.

I take it for granted, my Brethren (for certainly you will not have the Face to deny) that you do every Morning address your selves to God in Prayer; that you beg his pardon for your Sins, return him Thanks for his Mercys, and implore his Presence with you in the Business of the Day. This therefore you are supposed to do on that particular Day, when you expect to be called on for your Charity to these our necessitous Christian Brethren.

Be persuaded therefore at the same time to lay their Case before God, and intreat his special Influence upon your

your Hearts, that you may give in such a Proportion as he shall vouchsafe to be pleased with ; and be sure to mention in your next Approach to the Throne of Grace, that what you bestowed was what you believed he expected from you. Wou'd you but take this Method, I dare trust to your Liberality ; and I dare also to undertake for them, that this miserable People will not desire a greater Share of your Abundance, than this Method (and surely 'tis a very fair one) must incline you to part with. For which of you will have the Confidence to tell God in his Prayers, that he has either deny'd Alms to such deserving Objects as these, or else that he has given them less than his Circumstances wou'd well afford?

May that God, who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good Pleasure, so guide us by his Spirit, that we may upon this and all other Occasions, perform what shall be acceptable and well pleasing to him, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord, *To whom, &c.*

The E N D.

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